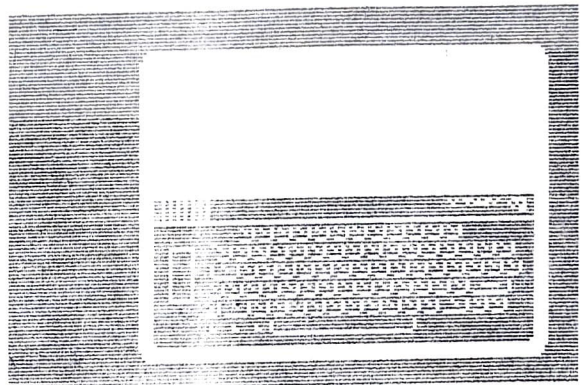
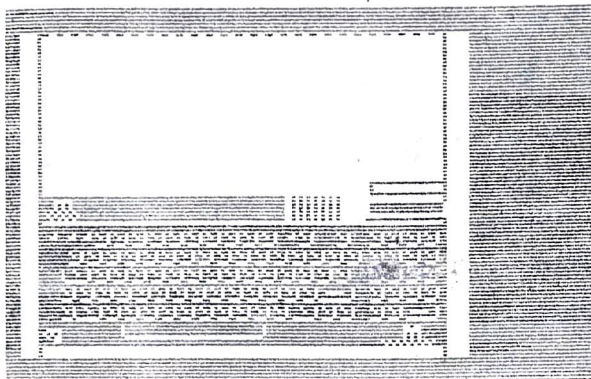
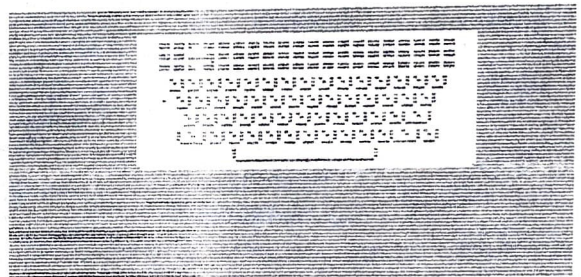
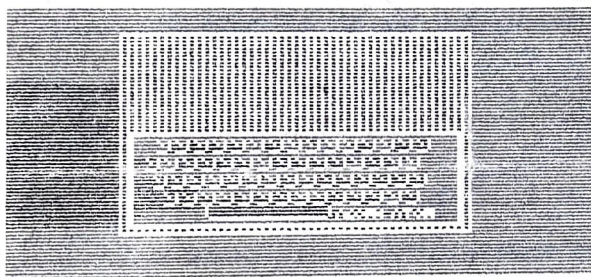




ACORN
September 1986
Newsletter #39



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DIARY

The next few meetings will be held on:

1 October
15 October
5 November
19 November

All meetings are held in the Shakespeare Hotel on Gibraltar Street, near Sheffield city centre. Note that there is a three week gap between 15 Oct and 5 Nov.

SOFTWARE SALE

The sale of surplus items from the library, conducted by our Chairman, Frank Webster (who could obviously get a job at Christey's any time he wants), raised the grand total of £5.20. We have not bought very much for the library recently, apart from magazine tapes, so if you have any ideas for suitable books or software, please make your views known to a member of the committee.

ACORN'S BABY MASTER

As most members must be aware by now, Acorn's new baby has at last been born, and christened the Master Compact. The following press release was published on Ceefax:

"A New Master BBC Microcomputer

"On Monday 1st September, BBC & Acorn launched a new BBC micro in the Master range - the "Master Compact". This is an addition to the existing "Master" range of microcomputers. It is based on the Master 128, but is at a much lower price.

"This new micro uses the Master 128 technology. It is supplied as a complete ready-to-use package including disc drive, monitor, computer, and 'Welcome' software. It can use any existing Master 128 software supplied on 3.5 inch disc format. This range already includes several hundred titles from leading software houses. Extensive 'welcome' software is supplied - 430K of programs in total!

"Three packages are available:

- * Compact Colour including computer, 3.5" disc drive, and colour monitor.
Price: £687.35 inc. VAT

- * Compact Mono including computer, 3.5" disc drive,
 and green-screen monitor.
 Price: £537.85 inc. VAT
- * Compact Basic including computer
 and 3.5" disc drive.
 Price: £441.25 inc. VAT

"The low price of the Compact range is achieved by cutting down on the little used features of the Master computer. The number of sockets have been reduced. The Tube, 1Mhz Bus, User Port, Cassette interface, and A-to-D converter have all been sacrificed. There is, however, a printer socket, and a connector for a Mouse. Atari-style joysticks will plug into the mouse socket.

"Upgrades available for the Master Compact computer include:

- * Econet interface To connect to any Econet system.
 Price: around £50
- * RS232 port Allows connection of modems and other
 standard items.
 Price: £29.90 inc VAT
- * Additional disc drive (3.5" only)
 Other types of drive cannot be
 connected without modification.
 Price: £113.85 inc VAT

"Although a part of the BBC Master series, the Compact computer is not expandable to the full capabilities of the Master 128. Many items, such as the Teletext adapter, 5.25 inch disc drives, cassette recorder, second processors and even a normal TV set cannot be directly connected."

The Compact is to become the first Acorn computer to be marketed by its parent company Olivetti. Acorn has announced that a 'substantial' initial order has been placed by Olivetti, who will badge and sell the machine in Italy as the Prodest. The Compact was on display at the PCW show, where it was rather overshadowed by Amstrad's new PC clone. The general reaction so far is of the usual "Nice machine, but too expensive" variety. For example, in a review of the PCW Show on CEEFAX, Miles Potwell wrote:

"...it's hard to see what (Acorn) are about ... the Compact is fearfully expensive. Pricing has always been Acorn's blind spot - what's more there's no connector for a telesoftware adapter..."

There are full details of the new machine, including photographs, memory maps, etc, in articles in the October issues of A & B Computing, The Micro User and Acorn User.

ACORN IN THE BLACK (ALMOST)

Acorn had an operating profit of £298,000 for the six months up to 30 June. This was turned into a pre-tax loss of £140,000 by the time interest charges were taken into account, but this is still a great improvement over the previous six months' loss of £2,900,000. Acorn say that sales of the Master series have exceeded their expectations, and the chairman, Alex Umboldi, is expecting even higher revenues in the next six months.

CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION

I know you don't want to think about it yet, but Christmas isn't all that far away. What we want from you is a design for an Abug Christmas card for members to send to their friend(s). It should be printable on a quarter of an A4 sheet, so that the paper can be folded to form the card. If you're really clever, you can put a suitable message in the appropriate quadrant, so that it appears on the inside of the card after folding. If you are doing this, check where, and what way up, it should be by folding a piece of paper. The winning design (if there is one!) will appear on the cover of the Newsletter, and will also be available to members who wish to use it as a card.

You should bring your entries to club meetings, and they must be in by 5th November. If the entries are of a high enough standard, there will be a prize of £5 for the winning design.

WHAT'S IN THE MAGS?

This is a new feature designed to help you decide whether it is worth your while buying copies of the Beeb-related magazines. With prices ranging from £1.25 to £1.50, it is expensive to buy all them all every month, so I will try to summarise the more important features.

Let me know what you think of the idea.

A & B COMPUTING, Oct 1986, Vol 3, #10, 116pp + 36pp supplement, £1.50

Features & Programs:

Efficient storage of numbers / ADFS disc menu / Font

designer program / Colour ikon utility / Interior design program

Reviews:

Acorn's Master Compact / Beebugsoft's Studio 8 / Solidisk's 256K sideways ram & real time clock / Crossware's cross compilers / Pear Tree's case / Educational software / Torch's Telecom Manager.

The supplement is on education, and includes articles on improving computer awareness, learning MicroPROLOG, reviews of science and electronics packages, font generators, Electron software, and printers and other output devices.

THE MICRO USER, Oct 1986, Vol 4 #8, 164 pp, £1.25

Features & Programs:

Use of arrays / Jumping backwards in assembler / Mode 7 dump for Epson & Olivetti Inkjet / Text compressor / Autorun routine for BASIC programs / Witch Hunt game / GCOL article / Spreadsheet displays / Plus a pull-out guide to Acornsoft's Aviator

Reviews:

Master Compact / Weirdbeard Prestel & Junkmailer / Beebaid & Novocad ROMs / Claydale In/Out Module / Econet / Games & educational software / Mini Office II

There is also a list of firms expected to be exhibiting at the Manchester User Show, together with some details of what they hope to be showing.

ACORN USER, Oct 86, #51, 202pp, £1.25

Features & Programs

Turtle graphics / Convert graphics screens from mode to mode / 'Spider' curve plotting program / How to handle errors in SWR / Econet in schools / Hints on fitting roms / Using MOS routines in assembler programs.

Reviews

The Master Compact / Swift spreadsheet / Three cross assemblers / Viewspell / Multiform Z80 second processor / Wordprocessing packages for children / Games & books

Dave Brown

COVER

This month's cover was designed by Ian Brown. If you want to draw a cover for the Newsletter, please contact Dave Brown or Pete Frith.